

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
MISSION TO THE NESTORIANS.

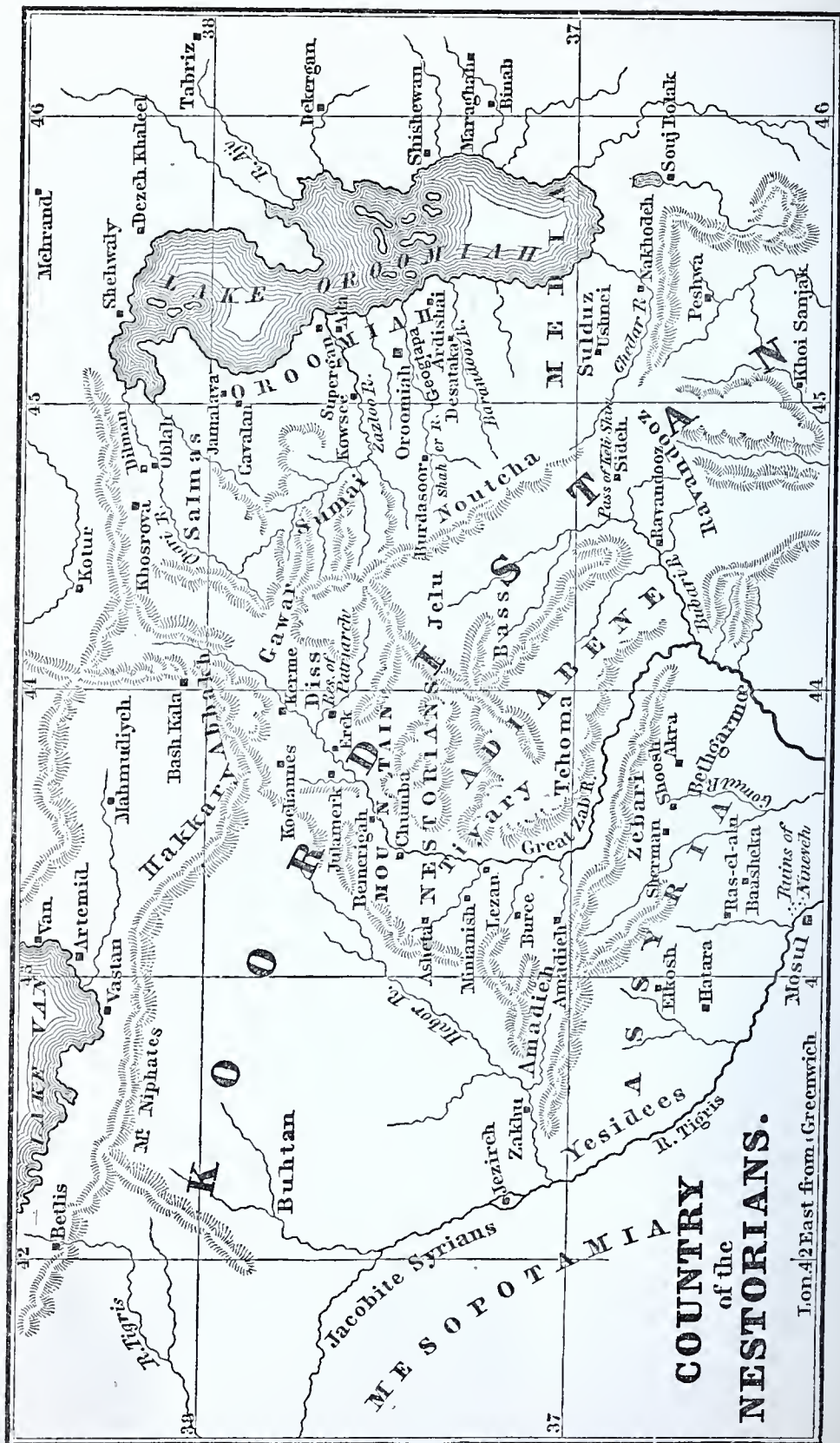
BY
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AND OF THE
ASSYRIA MISSION.

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SKETCH OF THE NESTORIAN MISSION.

THE NESTORIANS.

Who are the Nestorians?

THEY are a small remnant of a once great, influential, and actively missionary church—the oldest of Christian sects, and, in their prosperous days, were numerous through all the regions of Asia, from Palestine to China, and in China itself. Of the Shemitish stock, they claim to be of Jewish, or rather Israelitish lineage—a claim which may be valid, but can hardly be established. The conversion of their ancestors to Christianity they refer to the Apostle Thomas, also on doubtful authority.

Their origin as a Christian sect is a matter of authentic church history. Nestorius, from whom they derive their name, was born in Syria; as some assert, at Marash, in Cilicia, where the American Board now has a flourishing missionary station. He was a presbyter at Antioch, where believers were first called Christians, and, in A.D. 428, was made Bishop of Constantinople. The conspicuousness of that station, his courage in resisting some popular superstitions, and perhaps his rashness in theological speculations, made him a convenient mark for the envy and hostility of cotemporary bishops, particularly of the fiery Cyril of Alexandria. Summoned to a trial for alleged heresy, before the third general council, at Ephesus in 431, Nestorius was deposed, and exiled to the desert of Lybia, where he died. His comparative purity, in the general corruption which then prevailed, was the real ground of the rigor with which he was treated. His refusal to apply the idolatrous epithet *mother of God* to the Virgin Mary, was the brunt of his offending; and if he ventured into dangerous theories on the mysteries of the Trinity, they received, at the hands of his enemies, the harshest construction. In fact, Nestorius may, with considerable reason, be pronounced the first *Protestant*.

Increase of the Sect.

His cause being that of a persecuted man, rapidly gained adherents; and possessing the vitality of comparatively simple belief and practice, the sect early took the character of a vigorous evangelizing organization, sending missionaries and planting churches through all central Asia, while the rest of Christendom were slumbering in the profound torpor of the middle ages. The history of this Church has been a varied one, sometimes, as under the tolerant policy of the mighty Tartar conqueror, Genghis Khân, being raised to high

places in the camp and at the court, while subsequently, as under the bloody monster Timourlane, they were cut down and swept away by myriads, till scarcely a vestige of them remained, save in the fastnesses of inaccessible mountains.

Where are the present Nestorians?

They are on the eastern borders of Turkey, and the western borders of Persia—being thus in the very heart of Mohammedan dominion, and on the dividing line between the two great rival Mohammedan sects, the *Shiites* and the *Soonces*; the former embracing the Persians, and the latter the Turks and the Koords; those sects being mutually almost as hostile to each other as they are in common toward Christians. To be more definite, their country stretches from the ancient river Tigris, near the city Diarbekir, eastward along the southern boundary of Armenia into Northern Persia, more than three hundred miles; it extends along the Tigris on the west, about the same distance, embracing the Assyrian mountains and plains, as far as Mosul, or ancient Nineveh, on the south-west; and on the east it includes several of the most beautiful and fertile Persian plains. About two thirds of it—the western portion—lies in Turkey, comprising much of Assyria, or modern Koordistan; and the eastern third is in old Media, the north-western province of modern Persia, now called Azerbijân. The former portion is physically one of the wildest and roughest regions on the globe, abounding in scenery of surpassing grandeur and sublimity, and is inhabited by the not less wild Koords, among whom, and in proximity to whom, many of the Nestorians dwell, till lately subject to lawless extortion and violent plunder from those redoubtable neighbors. The Nestorians betook themselves to those mountains at an early period, as an asylum from deadly persecution, having less to fear, in the violent outbursts of Pagan and Mohammedan fanaticism, from the savages of the mountains than from the more civilized inhabitants of the plains on either side. In the lull of persecution, during the few past centuries, they have gradually spread themselves down into Persia. The Persian part of their country is one of the most beautiful on which the sun ever shone, consisting of several of the most charming Persian plains; bounded on the east by the lake of Oroomiah, which is ninety miles long, and thirty miles broad, while the towering ranges of Koordistan rear a lofty, snow-capped barrier on the west. Oroomiah, lying on the middle section of the lake, and separated from other plains by bold ridges that run transversely from the higher mountain ranges quite to its margin, is the largest district occupied by the Nestorians, and is the principal seat of our missionary operations. The atmosphere of all that region is so clear that the naked eye, with ease, traces objects distinctly at the distance of a hundred miles, which would hardly be visible one fourth that distance in America, and readily descries celestial bodies, seen elsewhere only by the aid of a telescope. Indeed, much of Persia, under its brilliant sky, is so fair as to be almost fairy; abounding in luxuriant fields, vineyards, and orchards, and smiling with tasteful gardens of bright and fragrant flowers, studded with gurgling fountains and shady arbors, and vocal with the notes of warbling nightingales, and other musical birds—a land emphatically

“Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”

Their Relation to the Mohammedans.

The Nestorians stand in the relation of oppressed *tenants* toward the Mohammedans, among whom they dwell, being cultivators of the soil, and artisans in the more common and useful mechanical trades. One continuous people, while living in the two contiguous Empires of Turkey and Persia, they partake much of the respective local peculiarities of the two parts of their country; those in the Turkish portion, Koordistan, being rude, untutored, bold, and defiant, and those in the mild and sunny clime of Persia possessing much of the blandness and suavity common to all classes in that genial country.

How many are the Nestorians?

Their present number probably does not exceed one hundred and fifty thousand souls, about one third of whom are found in Persia, and two thirds scattered over a larger extent in Turkish Koordistan.

Their Character and Appearance.

They are a noble race of men; manly and athletic, having fine forms and good complexions. They are also naturally a shrewd, active, and intelligent people, yet remarkably artless, affable, and hospitable, and peculiarly accessible for missionary purposes.

What led to the Establishment of the Mission among them?

The favorable representations of Messrs. Smith and Dwight, who visited a portion of the Nestorians in connection with their tour through Armenia, and into Northern Persia, in 1830-31, and strongly recommended a mission to them.

To go back a step farther, we may remark on what trivial things important enterprises sometimes depend. About the year 1827, that erratic adventurer, Dr. Joseph Wolf, in traveling through Persia, made a flying visit to the Nestorians. His adventures have more than once stood related to the missionary work, somewhat as alchemy stands related to the science of chemistry. Some of his statements respecting the Nestorians, found their way into an English paper. A paragraph quoted by an American paper, met the eye of the present Senior Secretary of the American Board, when he was penning the instructions for Messrs. Smith and Dwight to explore the Armenian field, and that led to the insertion of additional instructions to extend their tour to the Nestorians.

Going to the Field.

On the 21st of September, 1833, I embarked with my wife at Boston, in the brig *George*, to commence the mission. We had the agreeable and valuable company of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Smith, as far as Malta, who were on their way to their own field in Syria. No steamers had then made their way beyond Gibraltar, or certainly beyond Malta; and in the absence of English sailing vessels at the latter port ready for Constantinople, we took passage in a Greek brig, the *Neptune*, and reached the Osmanli capital in safety, on the 21st of December. Knowing no vernacular tongue in that great Babel of strange languages and multiform nationalities, as had also been the case on board the *Neptune*, I was mutely transferred from Greek to Greek, and at last set down

at a door, I knew not whose, till my hand was warmly grasped by Mr. Goodell, and together we hastened back to the ship for Mrs. Perkins. Messrs. Goodell, Dwight, and Schaffler had but recently established themselves in that great Mohammedan capital, till then uncheered by a ray of light. Now mark the contrast. All Turkey dotted over with mission-stations and Protestant churches—the latter fifty-two in number—and the whole empire shaken by the power of divine truth.

We lingered in that delightful missionary circle five months, to acquire something of the Turkish language with which to travel beyond, and in the hope of being joined by a physician, in which we were disappointed. On the 17th of May, 1834, we proceeded toward our field, still twelve hundred miles eastward, the darkness only growing the more intense the farther we proceeded. Half that distance we performed on the Black Sea, never before sailed over by an American lady. Landing at Trebizond, where Xenophon and the ten thousand reached the sea, we first ascended the lofty mountains of old Pontus to the region of perpetual snow, and then gradually descended upon the great table-lands of Armenia, on which we forded the eastern and western branches of the Euphrates, their margins still skirted with willows, as were the banks of that ancient river in the days of Israel's captivity.

Mount Ararat.

Four hundred miles from the Black Sea, and right on the boundary between Turkey and Persia, towers Mount Ararat, a lofty, massive, pyramid mountain, rising to the sublime height of seventeen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and more than ten thousand above the table-land; its upper third covered with eternal snow, and overlooking all other mountains in that part of Asia.

Disturbance from the Koords, as we approached that mountain, obliged us to turn off from the direct route, and pass around on the north and eastern sides of it, and enter Persia from the Russian province of Georgia.

Who are the Koords?

They are a wild people who number about two millions, split into some two hundred tribes, speaking differing dialects of a language strongly resembling the Persian, and inhabit the mountainous regions of Southern Armenia and old Assyria, from the base of Mount Ararat southward several hundred miles. About half of them live in rude villages, and cultivate the soil, and the rest migrate with their flocks, dwelling in tents. In religion they are Mohammedans of the *Soonee* sect. Their bloody character may be inferred from an occurrence which took place near the base of Mount Ararat, just before we went on to Persia. A formidable tribe, the *Jelâlees*, sallied down from their haunts on the declivities of the mountain, and fell upon a great caravan, laden with loaf-sugar, killing a number of the muleteers, and seizing a large amount of the property. While the men of the tribe were engaged in combat, their wives had already unbound some of the huge packages upon the backs of the mules, and were rolling them into a brook near by, and calling on their husbands to join them in *drinking sweet water*.

A few years afterward, the following adventure, farther illustrative of their character, occurred near the same spot. Messrs. Abbott and Todd, English

travelers, as they approached Mount Ararat, were arrested by about twenty of those Koords. Mr. Todd discharged his pistol at one of them, who instantly returned the fire. Fortunately both missed. Another Koord struck at Mr. Abbott with his spear, but Mr. Abbott parried the blow, the spear however running through his sleeve. The Koord, in drawing it back, unhorsed him. They then stripped the travelers, even to shirt and pantaloons, taking off their shoes and stockings also, in search of treasures, and afterward drove them a mile barefoot, at the point of their spears, up the rough ravine from which they had descended, where they kept them six hours, discussing the question of the disposal of them, and occasionally drawing the hand across the neck to suggest what might be their fate. Mr. Abbott at last told them resolutely that they belonged to the British embassy, and if a drop of their blood was spilt, the Ambassador would send an army upon them and cut off their whole tribe. This induced the Koords to let them go, thankful to escape with the skin of their teeth.

There are often amusing episodes, even in such frightful adventures. While the Koords were overhauling the plunder, they came upon a small box of *pomatum*, belonging to Mr. Todd, and asked him what it was. Wishing to tell a straight story, and knowing that the thing was unknown to the robbers, and so, of course, without a name, he told them that it was *cheese*! "Well," said the Koords, "you eat a piece, and then we shall know that it is good." So he was obliged to eat some of the pomatum, and they followed suit. These wild Koords are among the objects of our missionary labors, and will become good soldiers of Jesus Christ when brought under the power of the Gospel.

Detention in Georgia.

The robbery of the caravan, above mentioned, led us to diverge from the direct route and enter Georgia. In that nominally Christian land, whither we had fled from savage banditti, we suffered hardly less than we might have suffered from the Koords, through the studied oppression of boorish Russian officials. My passport announcing me as an American missionary, we were suspected characters, and as such were detained, virtually as prisoners, several weeks, in most trying circumstances. From this "durance vile," the very prompt exertions of the British Ambassador in Persia, to whom I succeeded in forwarding a letter, at length rescued us, in connection with the efforts of the gentlemanly Russian ambassador at the same court.

Arrival in Persia.

We reached the city of Tabreez, the place of our first missionary sojourn in Persia, August 23d, 1834. On the 26th of that month Mrs. Perkins became the mother of our first-born, of whose existence she was unconscious several days. That distressing sickness, to which our manifold exposures and hardships on our journey had rendered her system an easy prey, laid her quite on the brink of the grave; nay, carried her apparently farther across the stream of Jordan than any person I ever knew who returned again to the shores of time.

The Persians.

The Persian Mohammedans, who are of the *Shiite* sect, number, in Persia proper, from twelve to fifteen millions, and they are numerous in India. Phy-

sically and intellectually among the finest specimens of the Caucasian race, they are morally among the most depraved. The higher classes are a literary people, having from time immemorial had their poets, historians, etc., and while in manners they are so polished and courteous as with much propriety to be designated *the French of Asia*, they are quite as unreliable and hollow-hearted as they are profuse in professions and promises. Were I to designate their most striking national trait, it would be that of lying, so much so that they even have a proverb among themselves, often repeated with self-satisfaction, that *Persians will lie till they exhaust the material for lying, and then if perchance they blunder upon truth, it is from sheer necessity*. And while such is their punctiliousness in external intercourse and etiquette that the nicest sense of propriety is seldom offended, yet such is the state of their private morals as to defy description, and forbid approach to the subject for that purpose. Such are the prevailing class of the population of Persia. They, too, are the objects of our missionary labors, through the Nestorians, and the power of the Gospel is ample to raise them from the neighborhood of fallen spirits and fit them to be members of the Church of the First-born.

State of the Nestorians.

It is time that we hasten to the Nestorians. Leaving Mrs. Perkins at Tabreez, the place of our first sojourn in Persia, about two months after our arrival at that city, I made a visit to Oroomiah, which is about one hundred and forty miles distant, on the opposite or western side of the lake. I reached Gawalan, the residence of the Bishop, Mar Yohannan, late at night, the weather being too warm to travel by day. He was the first Nestorian with whom I shook hands. He met me in his yard, in the dark, and the first salutation of welcome had hardly fallen from his lips, when he earnestly inquired: "*How can you make books for us in your country when you do not know our language?*" Messrs. Smith and Dwight had been his guests three years before, and his conversations with them about schools and books for his poor people had not been forgotten; and "Joseph, the Jew," as he called Dr. Wolf, had been his guest still earlier, to whom he intrusted his rare manuscript copy of the New Testament in ancient Syriae, a greatly-prized treasure, with the promise of receiving many duplicates in return—a pledge which Dr. Wolf had so far redeemed as to get the Gospels printed from it, in that venerable tongue, in London, a box of which reached Tabreez just about the time of our arrival, and were a pleasant introduction for me to the people.

Mar Yohannan, who struck me very favorably from the first, promptly engaged to return with me to Tabreez and become my teacher, after we should travel and visit a few days among his people at Oroomiah.

I found the Nestorians civilly and socially much depressed, under the sore oppressions of their rulers and masters, and yet more deeply degraded in their morals; in fact, but little above the corrupt Mohammedans around them, except in the better observance of the seventh commandment. The impression of the missionary was most painful on first going from the churches of his native land among those fallen Christians, marking, as he must, all the difference there is between a living man and a *corpse*, or rather a *petrified skeleton*! Oh! how desolate was that valley of dry bones!

They were nice in some of their fancied distinctions, and punctilious in their heartless formalities. When the missionary went forth to a village on the Sabbath, to preach, he observed a poor woman, for instance, overhauling her rag-bag, and thus accosted her: "Sister, do you not know that this is God's day?" With a shrug of horror, she exclaimed: "God forbid that I should work on the Sabbath; why, I am only selecting my patches to have them ready for Monday." When the missionaries visited another village, on Friday, which was the residence of a bishop, he offered them wine, carefully abstaining himself, at which they wondered, in that land of vineyards, where wine is almost as plenty and cheap as the rills of water; the bishop's face, moreover, bearing a hue that only wine or something stronger could have given it. To their inquiry on the subject, he promptly answered, that the vessel containing that wine had been rubbed over with tallow to keep it from leaking, "and God forbid," said he, "that I should taste of any thing that may have come in contact with animal oil;" while, with the next breath, he ordered a bottle of *arrak*, or native brandy, of which he was ready to drink to intoxication, with no such scruple of conscience. These facts must suffice to show how ignorant, superstitious, and immoral were the Nestorians at the time the missionaries went among them.

Yet they were very artless and entirely accessible, welcoming us with open arms and hearts to our labors. They were also far more simple and scriptural in their religious belief and practices than any other Oriental sects of Christians, acknowledging the Bible, in theory at least, as the only rule of faith, and rejecting all image and picture-worship, confession to priests, the doctrine of purgatory, etc., with hearty indignation. They were thus, in their deeply-fallen state, still entitled to the honorable epithet which church historians have long awarded them, *the Protestants of Asia*.

Mar Yohannan as a Teacher.

He proved faithful, though very imperfectly qualified; probably as good a teacher as could then have been found among the people. He was also a docile student of English. As we daily read the New Testament together, he often took his turn in offering an exegesis on the passages thus read. The following will serve as a sample: When reading the parable of the leaven, "Why," asked the Bishop, "were there three measures of meal?" "Well, I should like to know why," I replied. "Because Noah had three sons," solemnly responded the Bishop. "How is that?" I asked. "The meal is the world; the three measures are the three races descended from Noah's three sons; the leaven of the Gospel will leaven the whole lump." This was not the only puerile interpretation of the kind that had floated down through old Syriac commentaries from early ages, still current and stereotyped with Nestorian exegites.

Removal to Oroomiah.

On the 15th of October, 1835, Dr. and Mrs. Grant arrived at Tabreez, and we immediately removed to Oroomiah. I reached that city, with Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Grant, on the 20th of November, the Doctor having preceded us a few days, to rent houses and put them in order. We arrived in a furious rain-storm, the first of the season, after six months of fair weather. The tardy join-

ers had no place ready for us to lodge ; so we sat down among them, in an open room, upon the shavings, of which we soon kindled a fire to dry our dripping garments ; and, sending to the market for bread and *kebab*, (broiled meat,) we ate our repast there, and afterward laid ourselves down for the night on the same shavings, with as lively gratitude and joy as often swell the hearts of mortals. The 20th of November was long observed by us as our *Pilgrims' Day*.

Missionary Labors.

Having the broad, common ground of Scripture on which to meet the Nestorians, and the most ready access to them, we at once addressed ourselves to the work of their amelioration and salvation. For, while their knowledge of the Bible was so vague and meager, they cherished a reverence for the sacred oracles amounting almost to adoration. Dr. Grant soon acquired a commanding influence over all classes, by his skillful practice of medicine and his active devotion to their welfare.

Our missionary work soon took the three-fold form of education, the press, and last but preëminent, oral preaching.

Education.

Our first missionary school was commenced in January, 1836, in a cellar, (apt emblem of the moral state around us,) for the want of a more comfortable place, it being winter, with seven small boys. It was the germ of our flourishing MALE SEMINARY. The number of pupils soon increased to fifty ; and from learning their alphabet on manuscript-cards, at the beginning, they rapidly advanced, till they have long graduated with very respectable attainments in literature and science, a remarkably familiar knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and most of them, with considerable acquaintance with theology as a system. From that seminary have gone forth nearly a hundred graduates, about sixty of whom are able and faithful preachers of the Gospel, not a few of them partaking much of the holy unction of the sainted Stoddard, under whose self-consuming toils and prayers they were trained. Others have gone forth hopefully pious, who, in other avocations, are hardly less useful co-laborers in the work of evangelization.

The Female Seminary.

But a single female among the Nestorians could read, when we entered the field. She was *Helen*, the sister of the Patriarch, who being considered of a higher order of humanity, might aspire to that unrivaled accomplishment. But for females in general to read, was an idea so alien to the people, that when we proposed that a few little girls should assemble for the purpose of learning, they laughed boisterously, and inquired whether we would *make priests of the girls*?

In Persia, as in all benighted lands, we are obliged to descend several degrees lower to reach the women than the men, so down-trodden are the female sex, in all countries not Christian. It was meet that woman should be last at the cross and first at the sepulcher, in recognition of her obligations to the Gospel. When I commenced reducing the language of the Nestorians to writing, I early observed the fact that it contained no words for wife or home.

Why? For the simple reason that the people using it had not the things. *Woman* and *house*, were the nearest approximations. But what a world of meaning ranges between those relative terms, in any land and language that deserve to be called Christian.

About two years after opening our male seminary, we succeeded in collecting a few little girls, to form the nucleus of our female seminary. The term, *Topsy*, would then not inaptly have described the character and appearance of those little girls; not that they were black, the people are nearly as light as ourselves; but for uncleanness, disorder, and propensity to mischief. Yet, in a few short years, those same individuals, if indeed we can call them the same, appear before us as well-educated, intelligent, refined young ladies; and what is yet far more, as devoted, active Christians. The most arduous missionary toil had indeed done its work upon them. But it was the grace of God that wrought effectually in that wonderful transformation. About a hundred pious young women have gone forth, among the graduates of that Seminary, who in the various relations of wives, and mothers, and teachers, are doing a work not at all second to that of the graduates of the Male Seminary, for advancing the Gospel among their people. Miss Fisk, as the result of her faithful labors in that Seminary, when her health broke down, and she was obliged to visit this country, at the last communion season before leaving the field, was permitted to sit down at the Lord's table with *seventy* of her pupils.

Village Schools.

In the course of the first year of our residence at Oroomiah, we opened three primary schools, in as many large villages, and the number of such schools gradually increased to seventy or more in almost as many different places. Sabbath-schools, too, at length came in, to exert their blessed collateral influence. In these schools and Sabbath-schools have risen some three thousand intelligent readers of the Scriptures, where hardly a score of male readers, and those being able merely to chant their devotions in an ancient, obsolete tongue—the Syriac—and no female readers, were to be found when we reached them. The mission has at length approximated the point toward which it has from the first been aiming; that of employing only hopefully pious native teachers, and such as are well qualified for their work; an object which time alone and the grace of God could, of course, bring about.

The Language.

The language of the Nestorians, which is a modern dialect of the ancient Syriac, the latter supposed to have been used by the Saviour while on earth, had never been written. The people had never seen printed books, the few copies of the Scriptures existing among them being manuscripts, in the ancient Syriac, which were kept carefully wrapt up and hid away in secret places, to save them from the ravages of the Mohammedans. The reading-matter for our schools, for several years, we were obliged to create, by the slow motion of the pen. I early commenced reducing the modern Syriac to a written form, and translating into it portions of the Scriptures. These were copied upon cards, which were suspended on the walls of our school-rooms, around each of which a dozen eager children took a standing position, and thus spelled out their lessons.

It is difficult to imagine, how strangely the commencement of writing their language struck the Nestorians. They had never before conceived of writing and reading, except in an obsolete tongue. Our beginning was after this manner. I directed priest Abraham, one of my teachers, who could write in the ancient tongue, to put down words in the modern just as I should dictate them. He did so. They were the Lord's Prayer. When he had finished, "Now read them," said I. He attempted, but had hardly read a line, when he was thrown into such a convulsion of laughter, that he could proceed no farther, so ludicrous did the sight and the sounds of his vernacular appear to him, when written and read.

Arrival and Removal of Missionaries.

In 1837, the mission was reënforced by the arrival of those able and excellent missionaries, Messrs. Holladay and Stocking. Both have gone to their rest and reward. The former labored faithfully, eight years, in Persia, and the latter, sixteen years; and most fragrant will their cherished memories ever be, among the Nestorians.

In the early part of 1839, Mrs. Grant was removed by death, leaving behind her a deep impression of her very estimable character, and rare fitness for the missionary work. "She hath done what she could," was the text of her funeral sermon, and is the appropriate epitaph on her tomb-stone.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones joined the mission in 1839, and returned to America in 1844.

Mr. Merriek, who reached Persia in 1835, in company with Dr. and Mrs. Grant, as a missionary to the Mohammedans, was transferred to the Nestorian Mission in 1840.

Dr. Wright entered the field in July, 1840, whose arrival was peculiarly welcome, in the absence of Dr. Grant, he having started some months before, upon the work in the mountains. Our medical department has, from the first, been a very important auxiliary in our mission.

Mr. Breath, our printer, also arrived in 1840, and introduced the printing-press among the Nestorians.

The Press.

Up to this time, the reading-matter for our schools, in the modern tongue, had all been furnished by means of the pen, as already described. Nothing could exceed the joy and the wonder of the Nestorians, when the long-anticipated press finally reached them. And with good reason did they rejoice; for its arrival was as the trump of their intellectual and moral resurrection. The memorable day on which it was set up, the printing-office was crowded with eager spectators. The *Lord's Prayer* was the first matter printed, as it had been the first written, and another scene took place in this connection. As the cards, containing that prayer, dropped rapidly from that strange and magic engine from the New World, the gazing throng were soon unconsciously bowing their heads around it, and exclaiming: "Glory to God — glory to God." They were not worshiping the press, but were thus, in Oriental style, giving utterance to their profound admiration, and some of them, doubtless, their heartfelt gratitude to God.

Our press has been vigorously occupied, during the last twenty-one years, in giving books to the hungering Nestorians. The Holy Scriptures have been translated and printed in repeated editions, the last edition with references. They have been printed, also, in one edition, with both languages in parallel columns. Other excellent books and tracts have been multiplied. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Baxter's Saint's Rest, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, and other precious treasures of our Christian literature, have long had a place in the family library of many a humble Nestorian dwelling, by the side of the Scriptures, yet always far below them in the reverential regard which that primitive people ever cherish toward the inspired oracles. We have a hymn-book, in the Nestorian language, consisting of about two hundred and fifty hymns, many of them translations of our sweetest English hymns, and others original, some composed by native Christians, and others by the missionaries. The first edition of this hymn-book contained the alphabet, and three hymns for children. Each successive edition has been growing, till it has reached its present goodly dimensions.

We have, for a dozen years, published a monthly periodical, embracing matter in the several departments of religion, education, science, juvenile matter, miscellany, and poetry. *Rays of Light* is its name, and it has proved itself no misnomer.

Our press has given to the Nestorians more than eighty thousand volumes, comprising more than fifteen millions of pages, in a language never before printed nor reduced to writing.

Oral Preaching.

The missionaries commenced oral preaching, as soon as their knowledge of the native language enabled them to do so, in their dwellings and school-rooms, from house to house, and by the way-side. In 1837, soon after Mr. Holladay reached the field, once visiting with me a venerable Nestorian church, he said: "Will the time ever come, when we shall be allowed to stand in these churches, and preach the Gospel?" I could have answered: "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be." Yet a year from that time had hardly elapsed, when the Nestorian ecclesiastics began to invite us to their churches, to proclaim salvation to their people, evidently under a deep consciousness of their own incapacity to do so. And those churches have been kept open to us, with very few exceptions, from that day to this, while scores of native preachers, mighty and eloquent in the Scriptures, have risen up, to share with the missionaries in those delightful labors. We have ever regarded oral preaching as of paramount importance, in our system of missionary operations.

Providential Favors.

We have experienced many striking providential mercies in Persia, particularly in the early period of our mission, which had an important bearing on the success of our work. In the course of the first year of our residence at Orooniah, the prince-governor of the northern province of the kingdom, a favorite brother of the King, visited that city, and having heard of our residence and labors there, he sent his uncle, another prince, who accompanied him, to visit our Seminary; and on receiving his uncle's report, entirely unsolicited by us, he issued in our favor the following FIRMAN:

Firman.

"The command of His Highness is :

"Whereas the very honorable and respected gentlemen, Messrs. Perkins and Grant, at Oroomiah, are attending to the education of the people, and render the people useful, by teaching them European science, the grace of our Excellency and Highness having become favorably disposed toward them, we order and command three soldiers to their safety, at this harvest season and onward; and in accordance with this grace, it is our command that they shall be honored, and have occasion to praise our beneficence. It is our command, that the exalted and noble lord, *Najef Kooby Khân*, Governor of Oroomiah, shall take care to protect them, in every respect; and he shall give to each of the three soldiers, the guard of their safety, \$3 per month, and never shall he neglect it. It is ordered that the trusty secretaries arrange and execute the sum of this blessed command.

"Written in the month of *Jama Ervel*, in the year 1252," [of the Hejira.]

The provision in the above firman, for our personal safety, of but a part of which we ever found it necessary to avail, has its explanation in the rude character of the people of Oroomiah. The Mohammedans of that province are Affshars, a bold, warlike tribe, originally from Affghanistân, who possess a hard character compared with other Persians. No Europeans had before lived in that district. And the class of *Lootee*, who are professional ruffians, taking their name from the patriarch Lot, but resembling in character the corrupt Sodomites who vexed his righteous soul, were more numerous at Oroomiah than in any other part of the country. It was shortly afterward, that one of those *Lootee*, in a state of partial intoxication, inflicted on me a wound with a deadly weapon. I was walking in a village, when he attacked me with savage ferocity. Just having risen from a bed of sickness, I was still weak, and in springing to evade the weapon, suddenly fell, which, under God, saved my life. The slight wound inflicted was only a speaking witness to convict the culprit. The result of this event, so frightful in its occurrence, contributed very essentially to our personal security. The offender was severely punished by the local authorities, and afterward was pursued, a second time, by an order from the central government, on a strong representation of the case being made to the King by Sir John McNeill, the British Ambassador. And a series of misfortunes soon befalling the friends of the culprit, the saying became common, that *whoever should harm the missionaries, the Lord would arrest and punish him.*

Protection of Native Helpers.

It soon became a question of still more difficulty than personal safety, and hardly less important, to secure the protection of our native helpers. This was also effectually brought about in the providence of God. When we commenced preparing a health-retreat, in the village of Gavalan, in 1839, as authorized by the government, the obstinate Khân, who farmed the village, which was the property of the government, not daring to touch the missionaries, seized the unoffending Bishop, Mar Yohannan, tied him to a cart, and brutally bastinadoed him, and then extorted from him and his family, a fine of

\$250. That outrage, reaching the ear of the King, through a friend of the mission, his majesty issued the following order to his brother, the governor of the province :

Royal Order.

“KAHRAMON MEERZA : Those learned men must be held in honor, especially that holy stranger, [alluding to me, as longest in the country, and best known to him,] who has come from the New World to teach knowledge to our subjects. By all means, inquire into the wishes of his heart, and cause him to be satisfied. Let him erect a dwelling for himself there. And that man, Nazir Ali Khân, who has so much annoyed the man from the New World, you must surely punish.”

This order of the King, the violent Khân could not resist nor evade. He was compelled to restore to the Bishop the extorted money, and so numerous and heavy were the fees of the officers intrusted with the execution of the royal order, as to subject him to a severe pecuniary punishment. This decided example has operated strongly, from that day to this, for the protection of our Nestorian helpers.

The interruption of our building led us to change our selection of a place for a health-retreat to Mount Seir, which has proved by far the most eligible and advantageous for the missionaries and their labors, of any location in the province.

Papal Emissaries.

During the years under review, we had fierce conflicts to encounter from Papal foes, in the persons of French Jesuits, the first of whom, M. Borè, now principal of the Jesuit college at *Bebek*, in Turkey, made his appearance in our field in 1838. This versatile genius could easily pass through manifold transformations, from the quiet, plodding antiquarian, poring over dim inscriptions and musty manuscripts, to a dashing colonel of cavalry, with sword, epaulette, and spur, driving through the streets of Oroomiah, like a frenzied knight-errant. He was but too good a sample of the long list that have succeeded him. But it is matter of gratitude to God, that these emissaries of the Pope, with all their tireless efforts, and multiform stratagems, to convert the Nestorians, have had far less success in Persia than we at first apprehended. The Gospel had entered that part of the field before them, and where it has free course, the race is not doubtful.

On the western side of the Koordish mountains, in the absence of Protestant missionaries so early, the Papists, operating from Mosul, which is a kind of Eastern Rome, have extended their conquests, by means often most oppressive and iniquitous.

Mar Yohannan's Visit to America.

In 1841, the impaired health of Mrs. Perkins compelled us to visit America. Mar Yohannan, my Nestorian teacher, who had, from the first, been variously and intimately connected with our mission, *must* accompany us, and see the good land from whence the missionaries had come. It was, of course, a *New World* to him. A sample of the impressions which the multitudinous marvels that every where met him, made on his mind, may be drawn from his first

visit to a cotton-mill. Gazing upon the hundreds of springing looms, and thousands of whirling spindles, all moving without the agency of a human hand, he could only shake his head, and in astonishment, pronounce the whole a display which far exceeded all the wisdom of Solomon! Mar Yohannan is a shrewd and talented man, and proved himself a quick observer of men and things in our country. The hearing of the ear could not, in half a century, have given him the light and information which he received in a single year. And while the direct effect of the attentions, every where lavished upon him, was to elate and measurably upset him, the quiet of his Eastern home set him right again in time, and the permanent effect of his visit was very beneficial to him. Among the strongest impressions which he received in our country, was that of the priceless value of female education. He pronounced Mount Holyoke Seminary the best college of the many he visited in America; and ever after his return, he has shown himself a zealous patron of female education in Persia, his efforts in that cause culminating in his marriage, two years ago, in violation of the canons of the old Nestorian church, which forbid bishops to marry, and sending his wife as a pupil to the Female Seminary!

New Reënforcements.

We deemed ourselves richly rewarded for that visit to America, not only in the improvement of our health but also in the character of the reënforcement which we were permitted to conduct back to our field, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard, Miss Myers, (now Mrs Wright,) and Miss Fisk. Mr. Stoddard is known and read of all men, and his praise is in all the churches, not only from his personal labors both in Persia and in America but also in the published memoir of his life, through which being dead he yet speaketh, and will long speak. He was a missionary for fourteen years; but "that life is long which answers life's great end." His eminently successful labors in the Nestorian Seminary, in training scores of able and devoted preachers, and in connection with many precious revivals there and among the people, are seldom paralleled, even by a missionary in a life thrice as long. He embarked at Boston, the first time, March 1st, 1843, and slept in Christ on Mount Scir, January 22d, 1857, at the age of thirty-eight years. Mrs. Stoddard, a true helpmeet in the missionary work as well as at her home, was cut down by cholera, at Trebizond, August 2d, 1848, when they were on their way to America for the benefit of his health.

Mr. and Mrs. Cochran reached Oroomiah June 20th, 1848, the day on which Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard left the place. Mr. Cochran then took charge of the Seminary, which he has continued to do till the present time, though in connection with Mr. Stoddard, after his return to the field.

Miss Mary Susan Rice joined the mission the previous autumn, to be associated with Miss Fisk, and has ever since labored very successfully in the Female Seminary.

Revivals.

We should recognize distinctly and gratefully the hand of God in the many revivals which he has graciously vouchsafed to the Nestorian field. The first occurred in 1846, though limited refreshings had previously been enjoyed there. Since that time there have been eleven special visitations of grace in the male

seminary and twelve in the female seminary. They have extended into many villages, where numbers have also been converted, and in some cases commencing in the villages, they have from them reached and blessed the two seminaries; and a general enlightening, softening, and elevating influence, of unwonted power, has gone forth from them, pervading the masses of the people.

It is impossible to convey an adequate impression of the intensely interesting character of these heavenly visitations. They have reminded me of the purest and most pungent revivals that I have ever witnessed in America, so far as the difference in the character and circumstances of the people thus blessed admit of comparison. There has been the same deep and searching conviction of sin experienced by the impenitent; his sins appearing to him like the sands, innumerable, and as mountains for magnitude; the clear apprehension of divine truth, the almost overwhelming sense of his totally lost condition by nature; nor less of the boundless richness and freeness of salvation through a crucified Redeemer; the grasping that provision with all the heart, casting the soul prostrate and contrite at the foot of the cross, and laying its sins on the head of the atoning Lamb, and the unreserved surrender of soul and body into the hands of Him that was slain yet ever liveth, to be His wholly and forever. Then suddenly the joy and peace and love and gratitude and praise welling up in that believing, penitent, grateful soul, before hardened and besotted, and but just now writhing in bitter anguish. Yet in depth of interest, I have never witnessed such scenes elsewhere, nor expect elsewhere to behold them.

And afterward follow the new-born soul on his career heavenward: sometimes halting, indeed, yet probably less than the mass of believers in more favored lands. Listen to his songs of praise, his melting prayers and moving exhortations, and mark the good confession of Christ which he witnesses in his life, often under hardships and persecutions, and in the case of those who have died, behold them lie down on the bed of mortal sickness undaunted; their confidence in a personal and a present Saviour calm and unshaken, and their faith, hope, and joy waxing stronger and stronger as their outer man approaches its dissolution, till, their face sometimes shining like dying Stephen's, they sleep peacefully in Jesus, and you would thankfully say: *This is indeed the power of a living Christianity.*

Earnestness in Prayer.

Perhaps no one circumstance has marked the progress of these revivals more strikingly than earnestness in prayer, evinced alike on the part of the awakened sinner and the quickened, longing believer. I recall the following scene: In a very interesting revival in the male seminary, the pupils were deeply moved by a sermon preached by the lamented Mr. Stocking, set home by the power of the Holy Spirit, and when they left the chapel the common impulse seemed to be *to seek places where to pray*. Every nook and corner available for that purpose was immediately occupied, and some, unable to obtain places of retirement, caught up several rush-mats that happened to be lying in the yard and spread them upon the snow, kneeled down upon them, and poured out their souls before God, seemingly unconscious of the publicity of their situation. They must pray.

Ardent Love to Christ.

We have observed in some a remarkable going forth of soul in affection toward the person and character of Christ. It has been manifest especially among the young, but not confined to them. Very aged persons have evinced similar feelings. There was one old man, called the pilgrim, from his having been to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage when he was young, the same who presented his only son, a little boy, to me, on our first arrival at Oroomiah, when, putting his little hand in mine, he solemnly pronounced: "This boy is no longer mine, he is yours; he is no longer Nestorian, he is English; his name is no longer Yohannan, it is John."* This venerable man became hopefully pious when nearly ninety years old, and died at the age of about one hundred. Several years before his death he became totally blind, and thus being cut off from earthly occupations he gave his heart and his time to prayer and communion with Christ, often spending hours together in that employment. His son has told me that such was his earnestness and enjoyment sometimes in wrestling with the angel of the covenant for himself, for his family, for his kindred, for his people, for the missionaries and their work, for the salvation of the whole world, that he has gradually moved along on his knees from one side of the room to the opposite wall, till then unconscious that he had changed his position.

Quickening of the Intellect.

In the case of such aged persons, we have observed the power of grace to quicken the intellect as well as change the current of the affections. Growing up in a benighted land, till four-score or more years old, the term idiotic would well describe most such persons before conversion. But the Holy Spirit, taking possession of their hearts, so wakes up their entire intellectual being that they soon become able to commit Sabbath-school lessons to memory, and lead in social prayer in a very edifying manner.

Deacon Gewergis.

One of the most remarkable illustrations of the power of transforming grace, among the Nestorians, was that of Deacon Gewergis, a wild mountaineer. He had been a thief and a robber, and had earned a bad eminence, even in that wicked land in almost every other evil way. He was a deacon in a church in which moral character had nothing to do, at that time, with qualification for ecclesiastical office. God moved on the heart of that wild man to conduct his two daughters down from the mountains to Oroomiah, and place them in the female seminary. A few weeks afterward he came down from the mountains to visit his daughters, girded with a deadly weapon, like a savage Koord, as was the practice of the Nestorians of the mountains. When he reached Oroomiah, a very interesting revival was in progress in that seminary. His daughters and many others were weeping and praying, under deep conviction of their sins. The scene was a novel and strange one to him; but, touching a chord of depravity, it angered him. He alternately plied threats and ridicule to divert them, but to no purpose. Miss Fisk, the principal of the seminary, observing his course, remonstrated with him, adding a few words of solemn

* Now the well-known pastor of Geog Tapa.

warning, in regard to his own guilt and danger. Those few words were an arrow from God's quiver that pierced his heart. He too, with tears and trembling, soon sought a place where to pray. Miss Fisk, suspecting him of feigning interest, fearing, moreover, to intrust him in a room alone lest he should steal the articles exposed, at first denied his request; but his importunity at length prevailed; and there, on his knees before God, he found pardon and salvation, at the foot of the cross before leaving the spot. And there has not, perhaps, been a more marvelous display of converting power since the day on which Saul was struck down on his way to Damascus! The lion was suddenly transformed to the lamb! So remarkable was the change in this man's character that even his native rudeness of manners soon left him, and he appeared before us as a very genial, courteous, Christian gentleman!

Immediately after his conversion, of his own accord, he took up the purpose of adopting Paul as his Christian model, and particularly in the matter of preaching the Gospel to his perishing fellow-men. He had imperfectly read the Acts of the Apostles; and not conferring with flesh and blood, he immediately went forth, without stipulation of remuneration, to fulfill that high purpose, traversing the length and the breadth of the rugged mountains of Koor-distan, from week to week, and month to month, year after year, till the end of his earthly pilgrimage! Often reviled and threatened, and sometimes beaten and stoned, he was nothing daunted, nor often cast down. Braving the terrors of almost Greenland cold and snow in winter, as well as the persecutions of wicked men, still he was habitually happy—nay, joyful. His qualifications for preaching were very humble, compared with the young men educated in our seminary, yet he was mighty and eloquent in the Scriptures, making the New Testament his great study, day and night, when not preaching from it. He overworked himself and brought on a brain fever, of which he died. As is common in that disease, he was delirious during most of his sickness; yet it was affectingly interesting to listen to him, even in his delirious hours. Almost constantly, he reiterated, at the top of his voice, the single phrase, Free Grace—free grace—free grace! And there was a most impressive sublimity in that utterance, to one who had known the man! Free grace had been the foundation of his hope that he was pardoned and washed in redeeming blood! Free grace had been the burden of his message of salvation to myriads of his perishing fellow-men; and the same free grace was now the foundation of his earnest expectation and longing to depart and be with Christ, which was far better.

A few hours before his death, the disease having spent its force, his reason returned, like the clear sunset after the storm, and calm and happy he slept in Jesus.

Number and Relation of the Converts.

While I have stated the number of schools we have opened, and of souls whom we have taught to read the Scriptures, and of Bibles and other good books we have published, we may not attempt to be thus definite in regard to God's spiritual part of the work. We can not doubt, however, that the number of converts embraces many scores and hundreds. About four hundred have been gradually collected, on careful examination and the confession of their faith, into clusters, some twenty in number, in as many different places,

virtually churches, while they are not formally dissevered from their old ecclesiastical connection. These churches, with their native pastors, observe the ordinances of the Gospel in a scriptural way, and reflect a clear and steady light upon the surrounding masses. The number of such reformed bodies is constantly increasing.

Character of the Converts.

But the work of conversion, among that people, is not to be measured by numbers. While every individual soul is of infinite value in the sight of the Lord, it has yet pleased him to gather in, as first fruits among that people, many chosen vessels to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. The converts are the most influential portion of the people — such from their ecclesiastical and social relations. The people are naturally ardent, impulsive, and aggressive; and the pious among them are, as a class, decided, devoted, whole-hearted Christians, through whom the word of the Lord has free course and is glorified.

Arrival of Missionaries.

In 1850, Mr. and Mrs. Coan joined the mission, accompanying Mr. Breath, after his visit to America, with Mrs. Breath, who also then went out for the first time. In 1851 Mr. Rhea was added to our number. He accompanied Mr. Stoddard on his return to Persia with the second Mrs. Stoddard.

Labors in the Mountains.

When we first went to the Nestorians the Persians would almost as soon have laid their necks on the block as venture into those wild regions, from fear of the Koords. Dr. Grant, soon after the death of his wife, in 1839, with characteristic courage, caution, and self-devotion, made his way around to Mosul, and in the autumn of that year succeeded in reaching the Nestorian patriarch through a region perhaps never before passed over by a European since the days of Xenophon, who traversed it with his ten thousand. The next year, 1840, he visited America, and in 1841 returned to those mountains, having secured a reënforcement to commence a mountain mission. Messrs. Hinsdale and Mitchel, and their wives, composed that reënforcement. Mr. Mitchel died, near the Euphrates, on their way to Mosul, from which point they were to enter the mountains; and his stricken and desolate widow followed him three days after they reached that city.

Dr. Grant commenced building a missionary dwelling at *Asheta*, in the district of Tiary, and labored there and in other parts of the mountains as he could. His medical practice gave him ready access and great influence in those wild regions. Mr. and Mrs. Laurie went out to Mosul in 1842, filling the places of Mr. and Mrs. Mitchel. Mr. Hinsdale and Mr. Laurie traveled and labored in the mountains with Dr. Grant, more or less; but the former was called to his rest and reward in the winter of 1843.

The Massacres.

The wild mountains were then in a disturbed state, even for them, and the lowering clouds portended a tempest; and Dr. Grant was obliged to retire from his post, which he did only just in time to escape the tornado of the Nestorian massacres, which fell upon that people in the summer of 1843. He had done

all that mortal energy and Christian heroism and devotion could do in the circumstances for the evangelization of the mountains, when thus early and suddenly arrested in his work. It was in his heart to build the house of the Lord, and the will, we doubt not, was accepted for the deed.

It was a terrific visitation, when the savage Koordish hordes, led on by two tigers in human form, Bader Khan Beg and Noorullah Beg, descended with the fury of an avalanche upon the brave, but too self-confident dwellers of the vales, and put thousands of them to indiscriminate and wantonly revolting slaughter; when helpless infants, tossed up on the point of their spears, and caught again while falling, before the eyes of their agonized mothers, were but pastimes in the appalling tragedy. Most of these slaughters were perpetrated in the district of Tiary. There was a similar massacre committed by the same bloody Koordish chiefs, three years later, in the beautiful vale of Tekhoma.

Good resulting from the Massacres.

Mark the providence of God in events in themselves so dark and melancholy. Nothing short of those bloody massacres would have roused the indignation of Christian governments, and impelled them to demand of the Porte that it send an overpowering army into those wild border regions, put a hook into the nose of those modern Sennacheribs, and drag them to a far distant and lifelong exile on the island of Crete, where they still are, thus breaking effectually the terrible power of the savage Koords, and inaugurating the more systematic and less unrighteous government of the Sultan throughout the Koordish mountains.

On the other hand, mark the effect of those same visitations on the surviving portion of the mountain Nestorians. Sorrowful as they were in their occurrence, they have proved morally beneficial. Shut up in their wild fastnesses—rejoicing in the munitions of rocks, thrown around them by the Creator's hand, bearing the Christian name and retaining the Christian rites with a simplicity almost primitive, though deeply degraded in their morals, those Christians had come to fancy themselves the inalienable favorites of Heaven—too wise to be instructed, too good to be reformed. The tornadoes of slaughter broke the spell of their false confidence, that they were the exclusive favorites of Heaven—made them sensible of their real condition, humbled them in view of it, and rendered them more grateful for the hand stretched forth to help them. It is a remarkable fact, in the providence of God, that those same mountain gorges, then so much desolated, are now quite as thickly populated as before; and long ages, in the ordinary course of events, could not have laid the wild mountain Nestorians, and the yet wilder Koords, so effectually open to the influences of the Gospel as those same massacres and their consequences have done it.

Death of Missionaries at Mosul.

Mrs. Laurie died at Mosul about the close of 1843. Dr. Grant, after all his courageous adventures and toils for the mountain Nestorians, found his grave in the same city, in the summer of 1844. He died of typhoid fever, which he took of the poor Nestorian refugees from the massacres, to whom he administered, huddled together in a hot caravanserai. The same summer died the little son of Mr. Hinsdale. And at subsequent periods Dr. Lobdell, the two

wives of Mr. Williams, and the wife and two children of Mr. Marsh, found their graves at Mosul. [See Assyria Mission.]

Mr. Laurie and Dr. Smith made a journey through central Koordistan, after the death of Dr. Grant, in the summer of 1844. Its condition and prospects were such, that they concluded to retire from the field. Mr. Laurie joined the Syrian Mission, Dr. Smith went to Erzroom, and Mrs. Hinsdale went to Constantinople, where she labored many years as a teacher.

Gawar.

Messrs. Coan and Rhea were deputed to commence a station in Gawar, on the eastern declivity of the mountains, in the autumn of 1851. Turkish garrisons had by that time been planted in the different districts of Koordistan, rendering the mountains a comparatively safe residence. Yet those brethren were called to endure hardness, from the cold in winter, where from four to nine feet of snow hedged them in for five months, from discomforts and exposures, in a shelter that was but a miserable hovel, and opposition and annoyance from wicked and unreasonable men, to an extent which even missionaries seldom experience. Mr. and Mrs. Coan returned to Oroomiah in 1853, on the failure of Mr. Stocking's health. Mr. and Mrs. Crane reached Oroomiah in the autumn of 1852, and were now ready to take their places in Gawar. Mr. Crane, a man of remarkable gentleness and transparency of character, and at the same time, unflinching fortitude, after a very successful commencement of labors in his much-loved mountain field, went to his rest, on the 26th of August, 1854—in less than two years after he reached the field. He was the first missionary to find a grave in the mountains. His little son died at a Koordish encampment, on the way to Oroomiah, whither the stricken mother was going with him, and was buried on Mount Seir, within a week after the father's death.

In 1852, Miss Martha A. Harris joined the mission as a teacher. In the autumn of 1854, she was united in marriage with Mr. Rhea, and went with him to Gawar, where she evinced a fortitude, under labors, and trials, and hardships, and perils, (particularly during the Crimean war, which, withdrawing the Turkish troops from Koordistan, threw the mountains into more or less disorder,) that seldom fall to the lot of a missionary lady. In September, 1857, after a brief but painful sickness, in which she was graciously supported by the consolations of the Gospel, she went to be with Christ, her grave being made near that of Mr. Crane.

Success in the Mountains.

The station in Gawar has been graciously prospered. A small church has been gathered at the village of Memikān, and out-stations have been successfully commenced in Tekhoma, Amadiyah, and other places in Koordistan, which are centers of light, all the brighter in proportion to the depth of the surrounding darkness. The mountains deserve and must receive a vigorous prosecution of the work, and the fruit thereof will, in due time, shake like Lebanon. The wild Koords, also, savage though they are, are still very accessible to the missionaries and their Nestorian helpers.

Interference of the Persian Government.

For a score of years, our missionary operations in Persia were not only tolerated by the government, but received from it positive encouragement, even being favored with strong firmans for its protection. But in 1853, the government having become jealous of all foreign influence, naturally ranged our mission with other Europeans, and it sent an agent to Oroomiah, to restrict our labors, particularly our schools and the preaching of the Gospel. The agent was well chosen for that evil purpose—remarkably wily and malevolent, even for a Persian. Often he wrathfully threatened and abused our innocent helpers, and sometimes beat and imprisoned them. Yet he attempted much less than he threatened, and effected far less than he attempted. The long calm had continued, till the truth had taken root and acquired a degree of strength and maturity, which enabled it to bear the shock of persecution uninjured, when it finally came, and even derive benefit from it. When it raged most, as was the case during the war between England and Persia, it seemed to effect little more than to impart firmness and decision to the suffering converts, and nerve them not only to bear much and cheerfully for Christ, but also to engage more actively than ever in his service. The Lord at length interposed, and by striking providences removed the most active agents in the persecution, and after two years, as before, and more than before, the Gospel again had free course among the people, and the churches had rest.

Recent Reënforcements.

In the absence of older members of the mission, some of whom have died, and others been obliged to retire from the field, very valuable reënforcements have recently entered into their labors. In 1858, Mr. Ambrose went out, designated to the mountains. In 1859, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, and Miss Beach and Miss Crawford entered the field, the two last named, as teachers. Mr. Thompson was suddenly cut down by bilious fever, August 25th, 1860, only fifty-four days after reaching his Eastern home; a precious sacrifice on the altar of missions—not thrown away, but “offered,” where no such offering can be lost or wasted. In 1860, Mr. Rhea returned to his field, after a brief visit to this country, with the second Mrs. Rhea, accompanied by Messrs. Labaree and Cobb, and their wives, and Dr. Young. This last reënforcement reached Oroomiah on the 25th of October, 1860; a noble band of young reapers, destined, we doubt not, with the scores of Nestorian laborers well fitted for their work, to gather in a golden harvest, both on the plains and in the mountains.

Remarkable Spirit of Benevolence.

The most interesting aspect in this field, at the present time, is a remarkable spirit of giving which has appeared there. Mr. Breath thus speaks of this movement, in a letter to the Missionary House: “The spirit of liberality has recently manifested itself among the Nestorians, in a manner and to an extent as unexpected as it is delightful. At the monthly concert, in Geog Tapa, last Sabbath afternoon, John, the pastor, called for a volunteer laborer for the mountains, and appealed to the people for his support. While he was ‘yet speaking,’ one of the audience arose and pledged about a month’s support for

the missionary. This example was infectious ; one and another arose, contributing unwonted amounts, and soon the whole congregation was in a blaze of enthusiasm. The spirit with which they gave, was the most interesting feature of the movement. More than a new sense seemed to be created within them. They did not know until now, how blessed it is to give. The whole amount given by them, not more than \$500, perhaps you will think not worth all this 'flourish of trumpets;' but you will remember that they give from their poverty ; that they are mostly in debt ; that he who has property to the amount of \$500 is considered rich ; and that probably no Nestorian is worth \$2000. When you consider these things, I think it will appear that for them, \$500 is as large a sum as several hundreds of thousands would be, from those who attend any meeting of the American Board."

Deacon Moses, a Nestorian preacher, in a letter to some of the missionaries now in this country, thus describes the commencement of this remarkable movement, in Geog Tapa, his native village.

"On Sabbath day, the last Sabbath of the English March, in the afternoon, priest Yohannan (John) was preaching, in his turn, about the monthly collection, (which was becoming very small,) that it was a shame ; and how much better it would be to take up more than they had been accustomed to do ; that, if it were possible, there should be a double collection, that a preacher might be sent to the mountains to preach the blessed Gospel to that part of our poor people. Suddenly there were whisperings, a little on this side, and a little on that side. Priest Yohannan desired them to keep still. But God was working in the hearts of the great and the small assembled in the church. Suddenly, one exclaimed, 'I will give one tomon,' [\$2.25 ;] another, 'I will give a tomon and a half;' another, 'I will give half a tomon;' another, 'Twenty-five cents;' another, 'Three tomons;' another, 'Four tomons;' one, 'A load of wheat,' or, 'Half a load of wheat,' or, 'One measure,' or, 'Three measures.' Others promised four half-bushels of raisins, or eight, or one, or three. The women also. One of them gave a monet, (a Russian dollar;) another, three quarters of a dollar; another, one quarter; another, two quarters, or one quarter. And others their embroidered head-dresses. And others, their jewels, and their rings and trappings. And others, one tenth of the products of their vineyards, or of the products of their clover-fields; and others, one fourth of their harvest, or one fifth, or one sixth; or one half of the raisins they now had in their houses.

"Another woman gave four pounds of butter, from a poor cow she had. And one poor man, who with difficulty finds millet for the necessity of his family, who was there on that Sabbath, said: 'I have a new mat which I have worked myself; I will give it.' On Monday he took it on his shoulder, and brought it, and committed it to me. Another, who had come to meeting on the same Sabbath, gave the fruit of fifteen ridges of his vineyard; and another, one tope [$12\frac{1}{2}$ English yards] of cotton cloth. And so they went on giving in these various ways, that in the coming autumn, when their fruits are turned out, they may fulfill their vows. And some of them (those who have the means on hand) now give what they pledged.

"I will here write for you some of the words that were spoken by a few of them. One brother of the Sabbath-school arose on his feet, and pledged a

monet (Russian dollar) added to the two (he had given) on his own account, in behalf of his two little sons, whom he had asked of the Lord, which made three dollars. And, again, after his mother had pledged an embroidered garment for the face, he rose and said: 'My mother, don't be afraid; pledge more, it is for the Lord. Remember Mary, who poured out the very precious ointment upon the head of our Saviour,' etc.

"Another brother (one who had not been able to speak in church from his bashfulness) rose and said: 'My brethren, I have a word. Our father Abraham and his wife Sarah were aged. In their old age God gave to them one only son: but again, God demanded of Abraham that he should slay him for a sacrifice; and he listened, and did as God willed. But the same Abraham was mindful of the covenant of God, that his seed should be as the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the sea-shore. So he believed, and so he received. We also, my brethren, though we are very poor, and are under the burden of the oppression and extortion of the Mohammedans, yet let us give bravely of our poverty, and we shall receive of the Lord according to our faith,' etc.

"My brother George got up and said: 'Ye women! When Moses was building the tabernacle, he asked of the Israelites the expenditures, and they brought them. The women also engaged zealously in the matter, and brought the brass on the backs of their mirrors, etc. If you will make your garments a little narrower, or diminish the tinsel bottoms, it will be very easy for you to give for the Lord,' etc. After a little time he spake again: 'Wake up! Behold the musicians are giving for the Lord! On their wealth (their drums and their pipes) is written: "Holiness to the Lord!"'

"To sum up, there were many addresses; they remained long in the church, perhaps more than three hours, when we went out, and saw all the faces of the men and women changed to joy and gladness, and their color and countenance like roses and open blossoms; the depth of their poverty and low estate seemed like a pleasant valley of flowers, and full of fatness and spiritual enjoyment, and in the midst thereof all precious hid treasures laid open, more precious than gold and silver and all the perishable pearls of this empty world. And all their heavy burdens of debt were lighter than a quill or the feather of a flying bird; and all their circumstances of trial and annoyance were turned to rest and ease; and oppressions and extortions were cast aside, before the blessed feet of Jehovah, in the name of his Son Emmanuel."

Mr. Cochran thus refers to this movement in his part of the field, and to the concert in Seir in May, a month later than the events above narrated:

"The good work is still progressing; and it is all a free-will offering, without solicitation on our part, although the people have contributed from the depths of their poverty; their joyfulness in giving surprises us not less than their liberality. The contributions, in the seven or eight little congregations on the plain of Barandooz, made last month, amount to about \$300. They propose to send two missionaries to the mountains, and support them in future. Our last concert at Seir was a memorable day. The pupils of the seminary were dispersed; only the small village congregation remaining. They are suffering also, and in debt from last year's famine; yet they contributed about \$120. All were cautioned to give understandingly, and only in accordance with their ability. About ninety persons were present, representing every house in the

village ; *and every one present gave more or less.* As they proceeded in their subscriptions, considerable enthusiasm was awakened, children casting in their bunches of flowers, the women, their coarse jewelry and other keepsakes, and the men pledging work, sheep from their flocks, wheat from their threshing-floors, etc. All were interested, and joy beamed in every eye. 'A new source of delight,' they say, 'is this of giving, and one we have been strangers to till now.' The whole sum that has been contributed and pledged, up to the present time, considerably exceeds \$1000."

Do not the distant streamlets, thus welling up on the plains of Persia, rise far above the great American reservoirs from which their living waters were so recently conveyed ?

Religious Relation of the Nestorians to the Mohammedans.

But, interesting as is the reformation in progress among the Nestorians, it should still be regarded more as a means than as an end. Exceedingly encouraging in itself, it looks to an ulterior and far broader object — the conversion of the millions of Mohammedans, among whom Providence has placed and preserved them, we trust for such an end. Indeed, we may properly regard this venerable remnant of an ancient missionary church, thus visited with refreshings from the presence of the Lord in these latter days, as a great missionary seminary, posted on the highlands of Asia, to publish glad tidings to the different nationalities in those remote interior regions. This work has already begun. Religious discussion has become common, on the part of the enlightened and pious Nestorians, with their Mohammedan neighbors and superiors, and cases are not wanting, among that class, of deep religious interest, and a few of conversion. More might profess Christianity there but for the death-penalty, still existing in Persia. Some are ready to do it, in the face of that penalty. Happily, the entire Scriptures exist in the Persian language ; the New Testament, as translated by Henry Martyn, half a century ago, and the Old Testament by Dr. Glen, a venerable Scottish missionary, more than twenty years ago. The Bible, in these attractive forms, is extensively circulated and attentively read. The prospect thus is, that the second half-century of the labors of the American Board, is to be ushered in by an ingathering from among the Mohammedans in Persia, as well as the more accessible portions of the Mohammedan dominion. "The beginning of the end," in the subjugation of the world to Christ, seems thus to have come.

THE ASSYRIA MISSION.

THE field of this mission embraced the northern part of the valley of the Tigris from above Diarbekir to the south of Mosul, including the whole region drained by its eastern tributaries from the Miafarekin branch down to the Zab. The wide plains on either side of the Tigris are noted for their abundant crops of grain. In the mountains fruit of all kinds is plenty, and rice is produced in those parts of the valleys favorably situated for irrigation.

It has a great diversity of climate, from the cold altitude of Ashetha, where May often surprises the winter's snow unmelted, to Mosul, where the thermometer sometimes rises at 2 P.M. to 116° in the shade, and one year (1859) to 120° , where it stood at 113° after dark. In October the mercury rises 18° higher at Mosul than at Mount Scir, near Oroomiah, in the hottest days of summer. Such heat could not be endured were it not for the extreme dryness of the air; but even then it is debilitating and hazardous to those unaccustomed to such a temperature. The same month, however, that witnessed a temperature of 120° at Mosul, recorded 85° as the highest at Bitlis, a town only twelve miles from the northern shore of Lake Van, and 5000 feet above the level of the sea. Mosul is only 300 feet above tide-water. Another summer, when the mercury rose there to $115\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, it was 108° in Diarbekir, and only 101° at Mardin, which, though farther south than Diarbekir, is 3000 feet high, and therefore cooler. In Mosul the average for the winter is nearly 47° , and snow is almost unknown, but in Mardin the winters are bleak and boisterous, with abundance of both rain and snow; and in Bitlis the average is as low as 22° , while from December to March it rivals Vermont in the frequency and severity of its storms of snow.

The inhabitants of this region belong to different races, as is manifest from the diversity of language. In Mosul and Mardin, Arabic is the prevailing tongue. Fellahi or Modern Syriac is the language of the Christian villages between the Tigris and the mountains of Assyria. A still more corrupt dialect of the Syriac is spoken in Jebel Toor, which is the stronghold of the Jacobites; and Kermanj or Koordish is not only spoken by the Koords but by the Yezidees also, and such Christian villages as are surrounded by a Koordish population. Along the northern border of the field Armenian becomes prevalent, shading gradually into an exclusive preëminence in the region beyond, and Turkish, the language of the government, prevails more or less in all the cities.

The great majority of the population is Mohammedan, but it is impossible to give any reliable statistics concerning them. As to the Christians, Mr.

Rassam, British Consul at Mosul, estimates the number of Chaldeans or papal Nestorians in the valley of the Tigris at 40,000. The whole Jacobite population is supposed to be not far from 60,000, of whom the larger half reside in Jebel Toor, a range of mountains extending along the western side of the Tigris, between Mardin and Jezirch. The mountain Nestorians, who immediately after the massacre in 1844 were estimated at 40,000, may be supposed to have increased, and may, with other scattered villages on the western side of the mountains, not yet gone over to Rome, be set down at 50,000.

There is little security away from the centers of power in the large cities, and so grinding is the oppression of the government, so frequent the incursions of Arabs on the one side and Koords on the other, that while lately the condition of the cities has been improving, that of the country has been steadily growing worse. For illustrations of oppression see *Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians*, 207-211, 298, 299, and 358.

The principal Christian sects in this region are the Jacobites and Nestorians, two branches of the ancient Syrian Church. From the former of these the papal Syrians, and from the latter the Chaldeans, have gone over to the Pope, and constitute separate bodies, with hierarchies and churches of their own. The Jacobites maintain the doctrine of one nature and one person in Christ.

The history of papal aggression in this region does no credit to the Church of Rome. The ignorant inhabitants of obscure hamlets have been told that almost all the world had become Papists but themselves. The poor have been bribed by gifts or loans of money. Criminals have been promised immunity from justice as the reward of their allegiance. A most successful measure has been the promise of European intervention to secure the rights of those who desired deliverance from oppression more than all else, but saw no other hope of relief than that afforded by such deceitful promises. Then the change at first was merely nominal. They were allowed to retain their own liturgies, their own saints, and their own ecclesiastical peculiarities. But allegiance once secured, innovation followed innovation as the people were able to bear it. The regular line of ecclesiastical preferment was set aside in favor of the champions of Papacy, and Rome stood forth the sworn foe of human rights and of that word of God, which is at once their basis and their defense.

As to the character of all the so-called Christians in this region, we can not do better than quote the burning words of Mr. Marsh, in describing the Jacobites of Jebel Toor. He says: "They have altogether gone astray; with every breath they profane God's name. They lie and drink in lies like water. Amazing judgment from God that liars believe liars! They cheat. They quarrel. They envy. They lust. They are idle. Careless to hear or study, they love darkness rather than light. They are captives to sin, and freely declare their impotence to amend. They are not ashamed, neither can they blush. They are conscience-seared, thrice dead, plucked up by the roots, dead in trespasses and sin. These words have terrible meaning. They see not, hear not, feel not. They are absolutely *dead*. God alone can raise them."—*Missionary Herald*, 1857, p. 55.

The Stations.

The first station occupied by this mission was *Mosul*. Dr. Grant, the pioneer in this field, passed through that city in the autumn of 1839, on his way to the mountain Nestorians, and Mr. Hinsdale took up his residence there in July, 1841. This place contains 50,000 inhabitants, of whom 7000 are Christians and the rest Moslems, except 136 families of Jews. (A family here contains at least six persons on an average.) The Christians are composed of 250 families of Chaldeans, 315 of Jacobites, and 270 of Papal Syrians, with about 30 Protestant families.

The Jacobites, left to themselves, would form a most interesting field of missionary labor, as they were in 1842, when one of their own Bishops, Mutran Athanasius, of Malabar, labored here in connection with the missionaries; but under the control of selfish and artful ecclesiastics they have since then been much less accessible. The Chaldeans have been more inaccessible, because more entirely under papal influence. Yet individuals have been hopefully converted; and it would not be strange should a much more extensive movement take place among them hereafter, for there has been truth enough disseminated through the city to lay the foundation for an extensive revival.

As elsewhere in the Turkish empire, so here, persecution has been the lot of those who have dared to avow attachment to the Bible. The hierarchy had less power here than in other cities, yet they were able to lay a most oppressive and unjust tax on the Protestants, till in January, 1854, Lord Redcliffe procured its abrogation, and secured for them in that respect perfect equality with other Christian sects.

There has always been a remarkably kind feeling between the Moslems and Christian population of Mosul, and perhaps nowhere else on the globe could the experiment of preaching to Mohammedans have been carried out so far and so safely. At the Dispensary Gospel truth has been set forth as freely to them as to the native Christians. And though for this Dr. Lobdell was once summoned before the Kadi, (Judge,) yet his refusal to deal out medicine, except in connection with such instruction, enlisted the feelings of the Moslem community on his side, even against their own courts of law. The boldness of the missionaries in this matter sometimes terrified their native brethren, but the Moslems preferred their outspoken honesty to the more time-serving policy of the Papists, and now the members of the little church openly debate the claims of Mohammedanism in the market with the followers of the Prophet; and even Papists now are sometimes ashamed to deny to Moslems that Christ is the Son of God.

The mission to the mountain Nestorians remained in Mosul from July 7th, 1841, to October 21st, 1844, when the massacre of that people and the declared intention of the American Episcopal Church to establish a mission among the Jacobites led us to retire from the field. When it was broken up it left a leaven of piety in the city, which attracted the notice of the brethren in Oroomiah in 1849, and occasioned Mr. Ford to be sent there from Aleppo in October of that year. Rev. D. W. Marsh sailed from Boston for this field in December, and from his arrival in March, 1850, missionary operations have been carried on uninterruptedly to the present, though just at this time no missionary is resident in Mosul.

A church of eight members was organized here November 3d, 1851, which has grown slowly up to twenty, its number at the present time; but the success of the mission is not to be measured by the present size of the church; for, besides the two members who have died, and several Nestorians in the vicinity of Jezireh, who are in fellowship with it, though not regularly received as members, (just as the converts at Oroomiah are not organized into churches, though in fellowship with the missionaries,) there is an extensive preparatory work performed both in Mosul and the out-stations in Boohatan, that needs only a quickening from on high to fill the face of the land with fruit.

One of the most discouraging aspects of the work at Mosul is the number of deaths that have taken place among our missionaries there. Of the eight who were connected with the former mission to the mountain Nestorians, only three lived to leave the city in 1844, and of those connected with the present mission, four have already died. (See pp. 21-22.) Several of these deaths were owing to other causes than the unhealthiness of Mosul. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchel fell victims to their inexperience and ignorance of the proper season for traveling in that climate. Indeed, the former never lived to reach the city, and the latter reached it in a dying condition. The life of Dr. Grant was doubtless prolonged by his removal from the malaria of Oroomiah, and he died of disease contracted by his exhausting attendance on the Nestorian fugitives who died in great numbers of a very fatal type of typhoid fever. Dr. Lobdell too was the victim of an excessive fervor that could not labor with the moderation he knew was needed. It is not certain that the climate occasioned some of the other deaths that have afflicted this mission; still it can not be denied that the extreme heat of the summer here is hazardous to health, though the winters are probably as healthy as in any other part of Turkey. It is probable that hereafter Mosul will be occupied only during the winter, and that the missionaries will spend the summers in a cooler clime.

Diarbekir was occupied by Mr. Dunmore in 1851. It contains 6402 houses, or not far from 40,000 inhabitants. Of these, 4000 houses are Mohammedan, 1500 Armenian, and 250 Papal Armenian, 28 Jacobite and 30 papal Syrian, 200 Chaldean, 50 Greek, 55 Jewish, and more than 30 Protestant. Like Mosul, it is very unhealthy in summer, but not from the same cause. This is probably to be attributed to the marked absence of municipal cleanliness inside of high stone walls under a burning sun—the streams of water that flow through the streets contributing their quota toward the general result. Diarbekir has, however, this advantage over Mosul, that a few hours' ride brings one to a healthy summer residence among the mountains, which can not be secured in the latter city under four days' journey, and it is even then of an inferior quality. The small village of Deira, near Amadijah, is seventy miles from Mosul; but Hainee is only thirteen hours from Diarbekir, and contains 3000 inhabitants, one half of whom are Armenians, and as many as fifty Protestants—while 10,000 inhabitants of forty other villages in the vicinity furnish an inviting missionary field.

Diarbekir has yielded fruit almost from the beginning. A church of three members was organized here by Dr. Azariah Smith; but it was deemed best to reorganize it April 16th, 1854, when out of twenty who were examined

during three days, eleven were organized into a church, which, since then, has increased rapidly, till it now numbers as many as eighty members. This result has not been attained without much tribulation. Owing to its distance from any official agent of Christian governments, the early years of this station were marked by unusual trials. Baron Stepan, the native helper, was knocked down in the street, and thrust into prison. The head of the Protestant community was refused his place in the *mejlis*, (council,) and threatened with death when he asserted his right. The missionaries were stoned by mobs in the streets, and the Pasha refused either to hear their complaints or to believe their testimony. A bride who had been married in the presence of Mohammedan witnesses, according to the law, was forcibly taken from her husband by order of the Pasha, and married to another man. This was in 1852. In 1853 and 1854, Baron Stepan remained at his post in Hainee, in constant peril of his life; but in 1855 the reign of terror ceased, the ruler of Hainee being deposed through the efforts of the British Consul, who had just been located at Diarbekir.

For a long time the congregation here suffered for the want of a convenient church edifice; but since the British Consul left the city in 1860, his house has been purchased, and with a few alterations furnishes a very convenient chapel besides other accommodations for missionary purposes. It is an interesting fact, that \$1000 were subscribed for its purchase by the members of the Protestant community in Diarbekir. The same year they gave \$60, as a Jubilee thankoffering to the Board, and the year before \$200 for benevolent objects, though as a body they are both few and poor. The illegal taxes levied on them, after a long struggle, ceased to be exacted in 1859. Some of the church members, both here and at Mosul, manifest a very commendable spirit of benevolence. In Mosul, a day-laborer, not at that time even a member of the Protestant community, gave Mr. Marsh a month's wages (100 piastres) for missionary purposes; and a member of the Church at Diarbekir has repeatedly gone to Mardin and other places at his own expense, and remained months laboring personally for the conversion of souls.

Mardin contains 20,000 inhabitants, of whom about one half are Christians, mostly Jacobites. It is two hundred miles from Mosul, and seventy from Diarbekir. Deir Zaffran, the abode of the Jacobite patriarch, is three miles from the city. Mardin is perched high up on the bare slopes of Mount Taurus, (Jebel Toor,) and looks out on a beautiful view of the plains of Mesopotamia as far as the mountains of Sinjar and the Ab'd ul Azeez hills.

As to the work here: if it had not been for a justice and firmness altogether unusual in Turkish officials, the Papists would have carried all before them. Threats, promises, excessive taxation, family quarrels were all brought to bear on every one who showed any leaning to Bible truth. But still the interest continued unabated, and the congregation even increased. Once and again the Pasha delivered the Protestants from the rage of their enemies, and even the Mufti stood up for right against the evil-doers.

The work at Mardin commenced as late as the winter of 1858-59, and is yet hardly out of the first stage of persecution, through which all missions in Turkey must pass to better things. But we may expect much from such an

ecclesiastical center, and a population so active and independent. At Kulleth, a village one day's journey north-east, forty-six out of one hundred and twenty houses are already Protestant; and the native helpers now laboring in this region speak warmly of the readiness with which the people listen to the truth. The account of Pilgrim Mikha in the *Herald*, 1859, p. 205, is intensely interesting. There is one illustration in that account of the power of divine truth, which we may not pass by.

Mr. Williams quoted the words of Isaiah: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." "What's that?" spoke up two or three at once. It took hold of them with iron grasp. Mikha afterward threw that verse into a crowd of opposers, so as to start them from their seats with an emphatic "God forbid!" and the most positive denial that such a verse could be in the Bible; and when Mr. Williams's hearers found it there, they could not believe their own eyes. Before obstinate, dogged, unreasonable, they became meek, docile, and asking for the mind of the Spirit. One of them subsequently said: "That went like a dagger to my heart, and I slept none all that night." Truly the Word is a sharp two-edged sword.

Bitlis contains 4000 houses, 1500 of them Armenian, 50 Jacobite, and the rest Moslem. It is twenty hours north-east from Diarbekir, and thirty-six hours from Van. Its difficulty of access is more than balanced by its healthfulness. It is beautiful too; the houses built along the steep sides of hills overhanging the river, and embowered in trees and gardens.

Here, as at Mardin, it is too early to speak of results, for this station was first occupied in the summer of 1858; and as the authorities are Koords, and the Armenians strong in numbers and in bigotry, the work has met with determined opposition. The same person has been unjustly imprisoned on the same charge as many as four times in succession, and as often released at the interposition of the missionaries. A native preacher, in company with the missionary, has been attacked in the streets, and all redress denied; and when Mr. Knapp had to leave his family and go to Erzurûm, for the justice denied him at home, that unprotected household were not allowed to dig a grave in their own garden for the native helper, who died during the absence of Mr. Knapp, till they had given a written promise to remove the body within a year. Though a new governor brought political relief, yet ecclesiastical persecution remained as virulent as before. So far every thing gives fair promise of character that will wear well when renovated by the grace of God. It would not be strange should the developments of the work here and at Mardin exceed any thing that has been witnessed at Mosul and Diarbekir.

The field hitherto known as the Assyria Mission is now merged with other stations previously occupied to the northward, namely, Erzurûm, Kharpût, and Arabkir, in the Mission to Eastern Turkey. See *Historical Sketch of the Missions in European Turkey, Asia Minor, and Armenia*.